

the irony. I am a chairman of military personnel. Tomorrow is my markup. It goes right back in, and here is what I put you on notice, Mr. Speaker. Homosexuals in the military goes in my markup tomorrow. I will win in subcommittee and committee. We are going back to the pre-July 19, 1993, policy, the Reagan-Bush, 50-year policy that this triple draft-dodger tried to undo.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LUCAS). The Speaker would like to remind Members that they should avoid personally offensive references to the President.

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I want to vote on the minimum wage. In this place, the Congress sometimes never fails to amaze me. Just when I think I am getting the hang of how things operate, it always pops up and does just the reverse. I thought that because of statements made by Senator DOLE and Speaker GINGRICH in previous remarks, I thought that there would be a vote in this House on this House floor for raising minimum wage, a minimum wage that has not been raised since 1989 and is at its lowest point in buying power in 40 years. I thought there might be an opportunity, and that is what I said today in a news statement.

I thought there would be an opportunity for the 110,000 folks in West Virginia that would see an increase if this minimum wage increase went through, 17 percent of all jobs on the payroll. I thought there would be a chance for them to have a little more takehome pay.

But what I learned today is, in this joint statement of the Speaker and the Republican majority leader, that is not to be. There is not to be a vote on the minimum wage, they say; instead there is to be a reform package.

I want to go through just what this reform package has in it.

The minimum wage increase was real simple: \$4.25 an hour today, which is what it has been since 1989, to be raised over 2 years to \$5.15. That is all: Flat, simple, fini.

But instead there is not to be a vote on that, says the Republican leadership. Instead there will be a reform package that includes significant family tax relief, including a \$500-per-child tax credit.

Incidentally, what they are not telling you is that one-third of low-income children will never see any benefit from that and that in order to raise the money for it they are going to increase taxes on low-income working people

who presently get a tax cut in the earned income credit.

The second part of the reform, so-called reform, package, is quote, "reforming the Earned Income Tax Credit." Well, what that means is that in order to give a little more to some, they are going to take from others in the same status. And, incidentally, that earned income tax credit applies to persons earning somewhere in the neighborhood of less than \$26,000.

They say that they are going to enact reforms to protect employer pensions. Let me tell you about the last reform that they enacted in the reconciliation bill. That was: Did they reform the pension? What they did was make it easier for corporations to go in and raid the pension for certain types of purposes. And so what kind of reform is this if you make it easier to take the pension?

Third: Another one is improvements, that is what this package says, in the labor laws to allow workers to choose flextime. You're darn right you can choose flextime. The last reform that got in the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities is to do away with overtime for over 8 hours' work or over 40 hours in a week. What kind of reform is that? You get to continue earning the old minimum wage and be denied overtime at the same time.

The list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, what the American people want, the overwhelming majority have said clearly: We want a vote on the increase in the minimum wage. Do not load it up. Do not try to clog it up. Do not love it to death by making it a Christmas tree. Do not add a bunch of riders. Vote on raising it from \$4.25 to \$5.15 over a 2-year period.

I know that some say, well, this just goes to students. Well, actually it does not. About half the people are under the age of 25 that would receive a benefit of this, and two-thirds are under the age of 30, and 58 percent are single women, women who are single heads of household.

But as someone who, along with millions of others in this country, worked his way through college at the minimum wage, I can tell you that students need that increase as much as anyone else. Whether it is carrying bedpans, as I did for 3 years in a hospital, or carrying a tray up two flights of stairs in a restaurant, students are trying to work their way through, young people are trying to get ahead, and the minimum wage is their only way.

I learned a long time ago that as a student and as a young person, as someone working for minimum wage, there was only one collective bargaining agent for me. There were not any labor unions; nobody else was speaking for me. The only way I would ever see an increase was when Congress raised it.

And for those who are afraid that business is going to dry up and go away, the studies indicate that is not so.

But there has not been a minimum wage increase since 1989. Has anyone noticed the Big Mac price going down? How about that pizza that you order from the fast-food catering firm or when you go into any restaurant? You notice those prices going down? Of course you have not.

The fact of the matter is that the minimum wage being raised by this relatively low amount does not influence prices to that degree. And so the fact is, the point is, are we going to give people a working wage? For the 112,000 in West Virginia, 17 percent of our work force who are trying to make it the way the systems tells them to do, working at the minimum wage, they demand, and a lot of other citizens demand, a vote on the minimum wage increase.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. As you know, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred by the Turkish Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923.

The Armenian community in the United States is mostly descended from survivors of this genocide who were forcibly exiled from their homeland. These citizens, many of whom reside in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, have made tremendous contributions to American life while honoring their own rich traditions.

On the evening of April 24, 1915, the political, religious, and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community in Constantinople, now Istanbul, were arrested, exiled from the capital city, and murdered. After the "Young Turk" government silenced the voices of the Armenian community in this horrific way, they began a systematic deportation and extermination of all Armenians.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to ensure that these reprehensible crimes against humanity are not forgotten. I am deeply concerned that the Turkish Government refuses to acknowledge this genocide, even today. We know all too well the consequences of forgetfulness. As Elie Wiesel reports, "Before planning the final solution, Hitler asked, 'Who remembers the Armenians?'"

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. PALLONE and Mr. PORTER for their leadership in sponsoring this special order.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute the Pennypack Watershed Association in my district, through its director Tish Ryan, who has done such a great job of bringing people together in environmental education programs, environmental management programs, and especially bringing students together in the 13th District. She has